

THE SILENT WORLD.

Vol. V.

WASHINGTON, D. C., FEBRUARY 15, 1875.

No. 4.

THE THOUGHTS OF THE DUMB.

FROM words we gain ideas;—there are some,
Alas! whose only knowledge rests in words.
Their wisdom empty wind. How different
The shadowy thoughts which wander through such minds,
From those ideal pictures, fresh and warm
And well defined, which crowd the mental sight
Of the deaf-mute! Words are unknown to him—
His thoughts are things—his logic and his chain
Of metaphysical deductions—all
Pass through his brain in bright depicted facts,
The fresh reflections in mind's mirror clear
Of Art's achievements or of Nature's works.
One, to whom Heaven, in wisdom infinite,
But to our sense inscrutable, had locked
The gates of Sound and Speech, was asked to tell
The meaning of "forgiveness."
Pausing then A moment, with the eye of memory
"To glance from Heaven to Earth, from Earth to Heaven,"
For fitting thoughts, he seized the ready pen
And wrote,—*The odor which the trampled flower
Gives out to bless the foot which crushes it!*

—J. H. Clinch.

[From the Annals.]

JOHN ROBERTSON BURNET.

BY ISAAC LEWIS PEET, LL. D., NEW YORK.

ALIGHTING from the cars of the Morris and Essex Railroad, at Orange, New Jersey, the traveller in search of the picturesque can hardly do better than to take a carriage and ascend the mountain. At every step, as he rises higher and higher, the panorama behind him becomes broader and deeper, till near the summit one of the finest views meets the eye that the imagination can conceive. Beautiful villas, with velvety lawns and blooming gardens, adorn the slope to its very base, while on the plain beyond towns and cities indicate the greater concentration of civilization, and in the dim distance is seen the great metropolis, bounded by the majestic Hudson on the one side, and the shining thread of water, known as the East River, on the other. To the south stretches away the great roadstead which gives it its commercial supremacy, with the heights of Staten Island looming up on the side and the bluffs of Long Island on the other. Passing the summit he finds the character of the scene suddenly changed. The road descends awhile, and then commences the ascent of the second mountain. A ride of three or four miles brings him to a sort of table-land, the view from which suggests only rural occupation and repose. Here are seen woodland and meadow, pastures for kine, and a few cultivated fields, with here and there an unpretentious homestead, whose antiquated appearance conveys the idea of having been the home of generations stretching far back into the past. Finally, nestled among the trees, he comes to a neat and commodious church-edifice, known as the Northfield Baptist Church, which is the most modern building to be seen. It was erected in the year 1867 to take the place of a structure which had existed since the year 1800, and which, though endeared to the congregation by time and peculiar associations, had become so much out of repair as to render a new building absolutely necessary. Near by is the burial ground in which the remains of those who have passed away in connection or communion with this church have been received for nearly a century, the church itself, occupying originally temporary accom-

modations, having been constituted April 19, 1796. The church and the hills around from which its communicants gather together for worship retain their ancient name of Northfield, though the township and post office are known as Livingston.

Into this neighborhood came, in 1787, an old revolutionary soldier named Abner Ball, and Rachel, his wife, who settled on a beautifully situated farm, and commenced life here anew. On the 17th of June, in the same year, they were made members of the church by baptism, and three weeks afterward Mr. Ball was appointed church clerk, which office he held for more than half a century. He was also president of the board of trustees, and was deacon of the church from 1798 to the end of his useful life, which closed May 20, 1848, at the age of four-score and eight years. To these functions were added the secular duties of justice of the peace and of tax commissioner. The singularly self-denying Christian character of this estimable man was illustrated when, in 1800, while preparing to build himself a new house, he contributed the lumber he had collected for that purpose, together with a considerable sum of money, to the construction of the church edifice which the congregation had undertaken. When contributions fell short of the amount necessary to pay the expenses of the pastor, he invariably made up the deficit from his own pocket. The poor found in him a friend and helper, and never was a needy person turned away from his door. Many a poor widow was entertained for weeks and months under his hospitable roof. Indeed, so literally did he obey the injunction "Give to him that asketh thee," that the man who did the most to build a house of worship for the church lived, to his dying day, in perhaps the poorest dwelling in the parish.

This Abner Ball had inherited the natural qualities that gave such tone and vigor to the manner in which he carried out the promptings of a sanctified heart, from a line of sterling ancestors. His great-grandfather, Edward Ball, who came over to this country from Wales, was one of the first settlers in Newark, and was looked up to as a leader in all public affairs; and a brother of this great-grandfather, who settled at the same time in Virginia, was, according to family tradition, the grandfather of Mary, the mother of Washington. His grandfather, Thomas, was even more thoroughly identified with the rising town.

His wife, Rachel, was the daughter of the last of three John Robertsons, the first of whom left Scotland for conscience sake in the troublous times of James the Second. She was a woman of much personal beauty and rare intelligence and worth.

The only child of this excellent couple, a daughter, whom they named Betsey, was married, at the age of 19, to a young man of her own age named Samuel Burnet, the third of a line of Samuel Burnets, the first of whom, a thorough Saxon, was one of the early settlers of Long Island, and the second, a soldier in the army during the Revolution.

Samuel Burnet was a self-instructed man, but he contrived to acquire a good knowledge of the law, and, as he had oratorical gifts of no mean order, was first in all Fourth of July and other public occasions among his friends, and neighbors, enjoyed several public offices, and was in much request in all disputes which came before their simple courts. He lived to the good old age of 82, having spent 57 years of his life in his own house.

This worthy couple had eleven children, of whom the subject of this sketch was the fourth, and the second son of three. His

mother named him John Robertson after her mother's father, thus perpetuating in him the name of the Scotch element in the family, which, with her father's Welsh blood and her husband's Saxon, produced in him that rare union of characteristics which have endeared him to all who have had the opportunity of knowing his ability and worth. While deriving so much from her, however, it was not to her training and influence that he was destined to owe the early moulding of his character. An instinct of filial affection induced her to yield to the earnest solicitations of her parents and transfer to their care this promising boy, to revive in their hearts the happy days when she, their only child, was adding new joys to their home by the unfolding process of mind and heart. Accordingly, John Robertson Burnet, born December 26th, 1808, became the next year's Christmas gift to his rejoicing grandparents, Abner and Rachel Ball.

A childhood passed under such influences could not be otherwise than pleasantly and well spent. Guarded, shielded, and encouraged by solicitous Christian love, he was brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, was taken regularly each Sunday to church, walked every day in the light of holy precept and example, received instruction suitable to his age, including reading and writing, and yet, with wise indulgence, was permitted to roam for hours at will, amid the beautiful scenes with which nature had surrounded his happy home.

A gloom, however, was soon destined to be thrown over this joyous period.

In the beginning of March, 1817, about two months after he attained the age of eight years, a cold, occasioned by getting his feet wet in melted snow and riding several miles on a sled in this condition, resulted in brain fever. A delirium of two or three days terminated in sleep, from which he awoke in the middle of the night. His grandfather's hand was upon him, and it was equally a matter of surprise to that kind parent and to the dear object of his care that there was no response to the questions mutually asked. A candle being lighted, it was soon discovered that the child was totally deaf. For months every remedy suggested by experienced physicians or thoughtful friends was tried, but tried in vain, till finally his afflicted relatives felt compelled to reconcile themselves to the conclusion that henceforward his ear must be closed to all earthly voices.

In this crisis the value of a sister's love and devotion at once became manifest. His eldest sister, Rachel, who equally with himself had formed a member of his grandparent's family, a young woman of uncommon strength of mind, gave to him all the time she could spare from her duties in the house. She encouraged him to exercise his voice, corrected his errors of pronunciation, never tired of answering his questions, procured books for his instruction and amusement, kept him *en rapport* with all that was going on around him, acted as interpreter between and others, and thus literally became "ears to the deaf and a tongue to the dumb." In this way the keen sensibility to his loss, which might otherwise have induced melancholy, was greatly mitigated.

When he had reached the age of fourteen his sister and friends began to use the doubled-handed or English manual alphabet, which added greatly to his facility of intercourse with others. From the first he seemed to have no aptitude for reading on the lips, and his articulation eventually became such that it was of no use to him except in associating with those with whom he was very intimate.

He now began to assist his grandfather in labor on the farm, but spent the greater part of his time in reading and study. He soon went beyond the attainments of his sister and became his own master. His knowledge of English literature became remarkable.

By the time he was twenty-two years old he was a good arithmetician, algebraist, and geometrician. He also understood the principles and practice of land surveying. He had obtained a clear comprehension of the elements of the several sciences, and had acquired the ability to read with ease Latin and French, to which were afterward added German, Italian, and other languages. The studies he had commenced at this period were continued and supplemented through life, so that it could truthfully be said of him, in his later years, that he was a man of ripe scholarship, varied learning, and rare attainments.

In the fall of 1830 he paid a visit to the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, and for the first time acquired an idea of the possibility of conversing by signs. So much interested did he become in this, to him, new department of Christian labor that he conceived a desire to become a teacher of the deaf and dumb, and on his return home he made an application by letter, which was successful, and he was admitted as a teacher in the following November. In the twelfth annual Report to the Legislature, under date of January 4, 1831, the directors thus speak of him: "Another person has been engaged as an assistant instructor and tutor, in place of the deaf-mute dismissed. He is a young man of uncommon mind, from New Jersey, by the name of John R. Burnet, and is not a mute from birth, having lost his hearing when eight years old, after learning to read and write. As he has not till lately had intercourse with those laboring under the same inability with himself, he is now on trial, without any other remuneration than his board, to ascertain whether he can acquire the art of instructing the deaf and dumb, so as to make that employment the means of his future support." In the same Report mention is made of his making meteorological observations and keeping a thermometrical journal. It would have been far more desirable for his purpose if he had sought the position of a pupil, and thus been compelled, as a matter of sheer necessity, to become familiar with signs, and, from participating in the instruction imparted, and noticing its effect upon his associates, learn the role of a practical instructor. The most successful teachers among semi-mutes have, in almost every case, been trained in this way, and, I may add, there is an influence growing out of submitting, in company with others, to guidance from minds educated in the schools, which has a most favorable effect upon one who would be a guide to others. The successful teacher must himself have been taught. It was also unfortunate for his purpose that the Institution was in a transition state. The former methods of instruction had failed to secure that public confidence which had attended the Institution at Hartford, Connecticut, and the directors were on the eve of making most important changes. Prof. Leon Vaisse had just been secured to introduce into the Institution the methods of De l'Epee and Sicard with the improvements made in the Royal Institution in Paris subsequent to the death of the latter; and shortly afterward Mr. H. P. Peet, of the Hartford Institution, was engaged to take charge of all the departments of the Institution, under the title of Principal. If the change in the methods of instruction and in the system of signs which followed Mr. Peet's arrival, in 1831, could have occurred when Mr. Burnet first came to New York, it would have been a great advantage to him. As it was, however, he was left at first to depend entirely upon his own resources and observation; added to which he was exceedingly diffident and unobtrusive, unaccustomed to mix much in society, and not skilled in the discipline of a class. The result was that he, though intensely interested in the deaf and dumb, came to the conclusion that he could benefit them in other ways better than by teaching, and so, toward the close of the academic year 1831, he resigned his position and retired, bearing with him the highest regards of his associates

and a substantial pecuniary recognition of the estimation in which he was held by the directors. He now began to look the future seriously in the face, and to determine what his future course should be. At this period, in a dissertation in which he discusses the various theories of happiness, and propounds, as his own view, that the happiest condition is that in which the energies of the mind and body find their just proportion in labor and rest, he makes these practical remarks:

When there is a necessity for moderate, but continued, bodily exertion, and a sufficient motive in view to interest the mind in the efforts of the body to the extent necessary to make these efforts well directed, and consequently effective; when, further, the mind has its means of agreeable relaxation when the labors of the day are over, and when, above all, there is a feeling of security and independence, then the secret of happiness may be considered as attained, and perhaps the condition of the careful and industrious farmer who is free from debt comes nearer to this happy state than that of any other class of men.

Under such reasonings he concludes to lead a farmer's life. He is now a young man of twenty-three, five feet nine inches high, with massive, well-proportioned head, clear skin ruddy with the glow of health, and firmly-knit and supple limbs. He can run at the rate of a mile in four minutes, can clear a fence four feet high, can swim a mile at a stretch, can climb upon the roof of a building holding by the edge, can lean from his horse and pick a whip from the ground without losing his seat, can spring into the saddle without touching the stirrup, and can carry a barrel of flour from wagon to house without assistance.

With such physical advantages, and conscious of the possession of adequate mental endowments, he does not look upon the world with dismay, nor upon the future with dread. He calmly makes his plans and enters upon them. His grandfather accedes to his views, and there is an understanding between them by which the young man is encouraged to improve what from that moment is practically his own.

His life at the Institution had given a new direction to his thoughts and feelings, and so, during the leisure that he knew how to secure, he continued his investigations into the literature relating to the condition and education of the deaf and dumb. From time to time he made occasional visits of a day or two to the Institution, for the sake of the society to be enjoyed there and of consulting its library. He would, also, go miles to see uneducated deaf-mutes, and was instrumental in securing admission for several of them into the Institution. He also sent many communications to the public prints.

In the fall of 1833 he went to New York to secure subscriptions for his book. He was received with much enthusiasm by those connected with the Institution, and here commenced that warm friendship which afterward subsisted during life between him and Dr. H. P. Peet, and which no doubt has been renewed above. He made the Institution his headquarters for several months, and seems to have enjoyed his intercourse with the instructors and the pupils. During his stay a fair was held for the benefit of the Institution for the Blind, and an exhibition was given in which both the blind and the deaf and dumb took part. In the course of the exercises was read a poem from the pen of Mr. Burnet, entitled "Address of the Deaf and Dumb to the Blind." It excited much interest at the time, and was incorporated in his book.

In the spring he was engaged by his uncle, Mr. Lewis Burnet, to become co-editor with him of the *People's Friend*, a newspaper published in Philadelphia, and he at once undertook to supply him with literary matter by mail. This visit seemed to be to him particularly agreeable, as he was wont to refer to it repeatedly in after life. There were then associated with the principal as professors men since so well known and honored as to make it sufficient in this connection merely to repeat their names: Leon Vaisse, David

E. Bartlett, Frederick A. P. Barnard, Samuel R. Brown, Josiah H. Cary, Barnabas M. Fay, and George E. Day. All these gentlemen took great interest in this talented young man, and encouraged his efforts and aspirations by every means in their power.

His visit to the Institution was suddenly interrupted by the death of his sister Rachel. This was the most severe blow he had experienced since his own loss of hearing, to the mitigation of which this estimable woman had contributed so much. The touching sketch from his pen, entitled "My Sister's Funeral," had reference to this event, and is a specimen of unusually felicitous writing.

In June, 1834, he proceeded to Philadelphia with the intention of taking a more direct share in the publication of the *Friend*, but soon came to the conclusion that it would involve him in altogether too serious pecuniary risk. He, therefore, spent some six weeks in successfully canvassing for his book, and returned to New York, where he obtained additional encouragement.

In 1835 his book was published, and he realized enough to induce him to assume all his grandfather's liabilities and take upon himself the exclusive management of the farm.

The old gentleman was now seventy-six years old, and, as he had a pension from the Government and received fees for acting as justice of the peace, he and his wife were able to live in comfortable repose with the grandson they so much loved.

In 1839 Mr. Burnet married Miss Phebe Osborn, a graduate of the New York Institution, an intelligent, well-favored, interesting young woman, who made him a most devoted wife, and contributed greatly to his happiness. Their only sorrow, the absence of little ones from their hearthstone, was providentially removed in a manner which beautifully exhibits the refinement of their sensibility. Mrs. Maria Ward, a sister to whom he was tenderly attached, died, leaving an infant daughter twelve days old. Mr. and Mrs. Burnet at once claimed the child as a memorial of the departed, and the father gave it up. They named her Catherine Sophia, and seem to have cared for her with great judgment. Remarkable physical health, harmonious mental development, and considerable musical attainment have been the result. The wealth of love thus bestowed upon her she fully paid back, and, in her ready use of the manual alphabet and of the sign-language, she has been to her adopted father and mother a great source of comfort.

On the 23d of February, 1845, death again invaded the circle of his cherished ones, bereaving him, on the same day, of both mother and grandmother; and it is a singular circumstance, of which Mr. Burnet used frequently to speak, that his grandfather, who died in 1848, and his father who died in 1865, should also have taken their departure on the first day of the week; and, to make the coincidence still more remarkable, two other members of his family, Abner B. Jennings, the son of his sister Rachel, and his father's second wife, died on the very day of the month, as well as of the week, (Sunday, February 23, 1862,) consecrated by the death of his mother and grand mother seventeen years before.

During the long period from 1835 to 1867 he alternated work, study, and literary labor, and scarcely a month elapsed that there did not appear in newspaper, magazine, or quarterly, some article from his pen. His contributions to the *Biblical Repository* and to the *North American Review* previous to 1847 were received with great favor. His visits to the New York Institution in the winter season kept him familiar with the progress of deaf-mute education, which he endeavored constantly to promote by his writings. The extraordinary publicity given to this Institution, with the great influx of pupils consequent thereon, has been due in a great measure to Mr. Burnet's zeal in this direction.

[To be continued.]

THE SILENT WORLD.

Published Semi-Monthly at 771 G Street, N. W.

JOHN E. ELLEGOODPublisher.

WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 15, 1876.

WE are again compelled to postpone publishing Laura's sketch until our next issue.

OUR subscribers who have received *unsigned* receipts as reminders of the expiration of their subscription, will please attend to them.

WANTED.—Numbers of THE SILENT WORLD for May 15, 1872; December 7, 1873 and February 1, 1874, for which we will pay ten cents each.

IN our column of Institution News we give the report of the Board of Directors of the California Institution after their investigation as to causes of the late fire. Charges having been made that it resulted from gross carelessness on the part of the Principal, and we are sorry to say that some one of our contemporaries had the inclination to quote the charges as made by *The Boston Globe*. It will be seen that the Principal is entirely exonerated from these charges, they being groundless, and published with malicious intent. The *San Francisco Post* of January 18th says: "Although the loss of so beautiful a building will at first thought cause the greatest regret, the contractor who built the cupola and a portion of therof says that the building was very badly injured by the last earthquake, and in fact much comment was made on it in the papers at the time. All the chimneys were overthrown and had to be replaced by sheet-iron flues, and a short time since the rafters supporting the roof were found to be nearly drawn from their mortises. Last evening the north wall was observed to lean outward a foot or so, but this was attributed to the heat. On that side there were no buttresses, and, indeed, for a building of its character, it was very poorly supplied in this respect, and is nothing to compare, in apparent strength at least, to the Protestant Orphan Asylum of this city. Perhaps after all, this seeming disaster is only another blessing in disguise."

[CORRESPONDENCE.]

NEW YORK, Feb. 4, 1875.

To the Editor of THE SILENT WORLD:

Please allow me to correct a mistake into which some of your readers seem to have fallen in relation to the *Deaf-Mutes' Journal*, published in Mexico, N. Y. The plan is to get as many as possible of those on the free list to become subscribers at \$1.50 a year, and then to fill their places with the names of others. Thus the circulation of the paper will be considerably increased while there will be just as many on the free list as before.

In the great State of New York there will always be two or three hundred deaf-mutes, especially those who have recently graduated from school, who will be unable to pay for the paper. As I feel sure it will prove the source of pleasure and profit to them I hope that the New York Legislature will continue to appropriate annually the \$600 to the *Deaf-Mutes' Journal*. I hope that in coming years as soon as deaf-mutes on the free list are able to pay their subscription they will do so at once and thus make it possible for the proprietors of the paper to remember their less favored brethren and sisters. As we pass on through life let us try to say and write kind and encouraging words and extend to each other a helping hand.

Yours, sincerely,

THOMAS GALLAUDET.

LLOYD, the famous map man, who made all the maps for General Grant and the Union army, certificates of which he published, has just invented a way of getting a relief plate from steel so as to print Lloyd's Map of the American Continent—showing from ocean to ocean—on one entire sheet of bank note paper, 40x50 inches large, on a lightning press, and colored, sized and varnished for the wall so as to stand washing, and mailing anywhere in the world for 25 cents, or unvarnished for 10 cents. This map shows the whole United States and Territories in a group, from survey to 1875, with a million places on it, such as towns, cities, villages, mountains, lakes, rivers, streams, gold mines, railway stations, &c. This map should be in every house. Send 25 cents to the Lloyd Map Company, Philadelphia, and you will get a copy by return mail.

A NEW SYSTEM OF THE "VISIBLE SPEECH."

Until lately, one did not expect, except it be in "a midsummer night's dream," to see a sound. But now we have changed all that, and last evening, at the Essex Institute at Salem, Professor A. Graham Bell, assisted by Rev. E. C. Bolles, displayed upon a large camera the very air ripples or sound waves produced in sounding various words and letters as registered upon a glass surface treated with a coating of lampblack by means of a pencil operated by the reverberating ear-drum. This scientific achievement is wholly new, and has just been reached, though not yet perfected, through the joint efforts of the lecturer and Dr. Blake of Boston. The sound wave was also shown, as proceeding from the living mouth by articulating in a speaking tube, the end of which was in proximity to a gas flame, which, through a drum-head membrane, was set in vibration by the sound uttered. This flame, being reflected upon a mirror, exhibited features characteristic of each succeeding sound.

Professor Bell is engaged in the development of a system of visible speech for the use of deaf-mutes, and not the least interesting feature of the exhibition last evening was afforded by the presence of a class of these unfortunates, to whom the lecture was transmitted, or translated, by one who heard it, in the language of the fingers, a species of rapid reporting which will compare favorably with the best.—*The Boston Transcript*.

RELIGION AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

WHEN AARON BURR was a young lawyer in New York, and used to ride on horseback to attend his courts at Albany, one of his stopping-places on the route going and coming was Kinderhook, at the humble but hospitable tavern of Mr. Abraham Van Buren and his wife, both pure descendants from a Dutch ancestry of the regular Knickerbocker stamp. In process of time, among the rest of the children growing up in that family, appeared a chubby, fair-faced child, with broad brow, twinkling eye, bright face, and abundant curls of deep auburn hair; and as Col. Burr would come and go, this lad would hold his horse's bridle while he mounted or dismounted and always receiving from him a silver dollar as he rode away. The child who seemed so great a favorite with Aaron Burr was Martin Van Buren.

He went to the village school, and got a taste of law in the office of W. P. Van Ness, in the city of New York. He was admitted to the Bar in 1803, and the next year married Miss Hannah Haes, of Kinderhook, who died in 1818, after having borne him four sons and two daughters. He never married again. He followed the law for some years, during which time he had a client who could not pay his fee in an important suit, but who turned him over a piece of land in the precincts of Oswego. That land afterward

becoming a part of the city, made Van Buren independently rich. Then

HE BECAME A POLITICIAN.

His first appearance on the political stage, at the age of eighteen, was as a member of a nominating Democratic Convention, in 1800. From that time till his retirement from public life, in 1841, he acted a most conspicuous part in the dominant party of the country. He was pretty generally in office of some kind, being made member of the New York Legislature, Governor of the State, member of the United States Senate, Secretary of State, Minister to England, Vice-President, and finally President, following, as he said, "in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessor." During these years of political occupation he obtained the *soubriquet* of "The Little Magician." He was a shrewd politician, and highly successful through favoring circumstances. Many of his rivals died off out of his way, many others were outwitted. The Albany Regency of which he was the head, was in those days a powerful engine of political influence. At first he was not a favorite of Jackson. But on the death of Clinton he was summoned to Washington as Secretary of State, when he went deliberately to work to wind himself into the affections of "Old Hickory." One of his first measures was the warm espousal of the cause of Mrs. Eaton, whose case was just then on the *tapis*, and a mighty breeze was blowing on her account in the high social circles of the Capital. Van Buren paid her the most marked attention, and so wrought upon the old hero's mind by his representations of the cruelties she had suffered that it was finally determined the Cabinet should be broken up. The plan was for Van Buren and General Eaton to resign, and the rest to be dismissed: It worked admirably. All was accomplished, and Van Buren went to England. The Senate, however, at its next session, refused to confirm him, and this raised the cry of persecution, and placed him on the ticket with Jackson, in 1832, as Vice-President. He was elected, and sat for four years as presiding officer of the very Senate who had just before refused his confirmation as Minister to England. This was a sweet revenge.

At the end of Jackson's second term, Van Buren was put in nomination by the Democratic party for his successor. This brought out a fearful tide of opposition against him. Among the adversaries was the far-famed David Crockett, who wrote a bitter book against Van Buren, and this is one of his pictures of "the heir apparent."

He was once "contented to eat and to drink and to associate with plain men, with honest hearts and clean hands. If he was travelling and stopped at a house, he was willing to sit down among the people, and did not feel himself degraded by riding in a comfortable country wagon. Then anybody could tell by his looks that he was not a woman. But the signs of the times are wofully changed. Now he travels about the country and through the cities in an English coach; has English servants dressed in uniform—I think they call it livery. They look as big as most of our members of Congress, and fully as fine as the higher officers in the army. No longer mixes with the sons of little tavern-keepers; forgets all his old companions and friends in the humbler walks of life; hardly knows, I suspect, his old patron Rial; eats in a room by himself, and is so stiff in his gait and so prim in his dress that he is what the English call a dandy. When he enters the Senate Chamber in the morning, he struts and swaggers like a crow in a gutter. He is laced up in corsets such as women in town wear, and, if possible, tighter than the best of them. It would be difficult to say, from his personal appearance, whether he was a man or a woman, but for his large red and grey whiskers."

But in spite of all ridicule and all opposition, Van Buren was chosen President by a large majority in the Electoral College, and on the 4th of March, 1837, he entered upon the administration of his office.

THE REIGN AT THE WHITE HOUSE

for the next four years was exceedingly brilliant. Being a widower, he was obliged to call in to his aid a lady friend, who did for him the honors of his family. It was at this time that the gold spoons and other extra-Republican extravagances were introduced at the executive mansion. Over this a mighty hue and cry was raised. But Mr. Clay, who was somewhat aristocratic in his notions, paid Van Buren the following hearty compliment: "He dispenses in the noble mansion he occupies—one worthy of the chief magistrate of a great people—a generous and liberal hospitality. An acquaintance of more than twenty years has inspired me with respect for the man."

During this time he regularly attended religious service at St. John's church, under the ministrations of the Rev. Mr. Hawley, then the rector. He sat in the pew which had before been occupied, by Madison, Monroe, and John Quincy Adams, and every Sunday his carriage in great state brought him to the door of the church, although it is situated near the White House, with only a square between. He was one of the most festive presidents we ever had. His presence graced many private parties of the citizens; and there is now a lady in Washington, a daughter of Amos Kendall, who remembers, with some excusable pride, his dancing with her while yet she was scarcely more than a child. It is not likely that Van Buren, with his ideas of what a man of the world should be, promoted any great air of religious devotion about the Presidential establishment. It was a good deal in the style of the pomp and pageantry of the English nobility. There were always dinner on the grandest scale, and women, wine, and music to enliven every scene. It was the heyday of fashionable life, and the splendor of high society, in which worldly exhilaration all the household shared in due measure and degree.

But at this very moment the country was in a fearful state. Commerce and manufactures were prostrate, hundreds of once wealthy and flourishing merchantile houses had sunk into hopeless bankruptcy, citizens came together in immense public meetings, charging the condition of the country on the policy of the administration. The President had been in his chair scarcely over two months when the crash was consummated by the universal bank suspension of specie payments. This compelled him to call an extra session of Congress in the September following, when it was found that the great party that had raised him to the highest office of the Republic had lost its hold upon popular confidence, and from that day forward the tide of opposition rolled on, until at the next Presidential election the Whigs, with General Harrison and John Tyler, swept the Democracy from power.

HIS PERSONAL QUALITIES.

Van Buren, in his best days, was exceedingly trim and elegant in his dress and manners. He was of medium size, light hair and eyes, animated face, massive brow, marking intellectual power and penetration, quickness of apprehension and benevolence of disposition, with unusual reflective faculties, caution, and firmness. He was regarded by his political opponents as a very foxy man. His shrewdness in being able to state a point in terms of ambiguous construction was held to be remarkable. He was so great an adept that a formula went the rounds illustrative of this feature of his mind. He was compared to "a sportsman who could so fire at an animal as to hit if it were a deer, and miss if it turned out to be a cow." His personal habits were those of a gentleman of the old

school—the very pink of courtliness, suavity, and gallantry. He was never accused of low and vulgar vices.—*Mos. in The Christian at Work of Jan. 21.*

GESTURE-LANGUAGE.

THE possession of ideas, whether they be right or wrong, infers more or less reason in those beings who possess them. Those ideas would be absolutely unknown without some means of transmitting them, and such means we call by the name of language.

There are several kinds and degrees of language known to ourselves. First comes the spoken language, in which ideas are clothed in certain definitely regulated sounds. Then there is the written language, in which those sounds are reduced to form, and heard with the eye instead of the ear.

Then there is the language of gesture, which is little employed among ourselves, but in some parts of the earth forms a necessary concomitant to the spoken language, or can be substituted for it. The Bosjesmans of Southern Africa, for example, are unable to converse with freedom when in the dark, the visible gestures being needed to supplement the audible words. This necessity is so great that if they wish to talk in a dark night they are obliged to light a fire.

Among the North American Indian tribes the language of gesture forms an important part of every man's education. There are very many of these tribes, and they all speak different dialects, which in many cases vary so much that they are practically different languages.

Were it not for some other means of communication besides spoken words, no one would be able to converse with another who did not happen to belong to his own tribe. Gestures, however, take the place of words, and form a universal language. This sign-language is very simple, is based upon definite principles, and is easy of attainment. Captain Burton has written an account of the sign-language which ought to be carefully read by all travelers. The language as given by him is easily mastered, and in a few hours an Englishman would make himself capable of conversing with any of the savage tribes of North American Indians without understanding a single word of their spoken language.

We English, in consequence of our physical constitution, which our Continental neighbors are pleased to call "phlegmatic," use gesture-language less than almost any nation upon earth, looking upon gesture in connection with language much as we do upon ornament in connection with objects of utility. Yet even we use it, though sparingly, and almost unconsciously.

That it is natural to us is shown by the untaught and graceful gesture-language of a child, which is able to express its thoughts by gesture long before it obtains the power of speech. I knew a child who managed to express himself so well by gesture that he did not trouble himself to speak a word until after he had completed his third year. His mother was terribly distressed at his backwardness; but, after he found the use of his tongue, he more than compensated for his previous silence, and I fancy that his mother would occasionally have preferred an interval of the gesture-language which had been so distasteful to her.

In maturer years this silent language survives. To take a few familiar examples: The uplifted finger expresses the idea of warning as plainly as if the word had been used. If one person tells another a tale, and if his narrative be received with an almost imperceptible shrug of the shoulder, incredulity is expressed as clearly and as offensively as if the lie had been given in words. Similarly, the upraised eyebrows express wonder, but at the same time imply belief.

To shake the closed fist expresses menace, and, indeed, such a gesture is actionable at law. To present the palms of the hands toward an object expresses rejection, while the open arms equally expresses acceptance. There are some ladies who are addicted to the feminine vice of tossing their heads when they meet with any thing which does not happen to suit them at the moment. It is really wonderful to see how much they enjoy it, and how they think themselves to have elevated their dignity together with their noses above the ordinary level of humanity. Their idea is a ludicrously false one, but they certainly express it by their gesture.

Again, words can not express contempt more forcibly than the action of snapping the fingers or turning the back; nor can words be more expressive of veneration than the act of bending the knee. Words are not needed to express devotion when the clasped hands and uplifted eye are seen; while remorse is shown by the cowering form crouching to the earth as if crushed by the weight of guilt, and conscious innocence by the erect body and uplifted head.

Not to multiply further examples which will strike any one who takes the trouble to think on the subject, it is evident that ideas can be conveyed by gestures without the use of words, and that any mode of transmitting ideas is a form of language.

The gesture-language is that which is chiefly used by the lower animals when they wish to convey their ideas to man, and, in its way, it is as perfect a language as that which was employed by the child above mentioned, who did not choose to take the trouble of speaking when he could make himself understood by gesture; and whether these gestures be used by man, child, or beast, they are intended for the transmission of ideas, which are the result of reason, and not of instinct.

Painters would be in a very bad way, if they were not aided by the natural language of gesture. They cannot paint ideas, but they can paint the gestures which are expressive of ideas, and so can make themselves as well understood as if they had made use of the written language. Indeed, the same model does duty for all kinds of personages and all kinds of emotions, as long as the gestures cannot be represented. An old gray-headed, long-bearded man, with his hair tossing in the wind and his hands wildly clinched, represents grief and madness, as personated in Lear. The same individual, with face upraised and a harp on his knee, will be adoration, personified by David. Let him shut his eyes and hold out his hands, and he represents dignified penury in the person of Belisarius. The same rule holds good with sculptors. Man really could not go through existence without a gesture-language, and that language, as we shall presently see, is the common property of himself and the lower animals.

Even among ourselves there is a recognized language of signs, namely, that by which we can exchange ideas with the deaf and dumb. It has been reduced to a form almost as definite as the written or spoken language; and it is worthy of notice that very many of the signs are identical with those in use among the Indian tribes. Thus a deaf-and-dumb man who had learned the sign-language in England would be able to converse with the Indian tribes; while a man who was in possession of his powers of speech and hearing could neither understand them nor make himself intelligible to them, if he were ignorant of this simple code of signs. I have seen evidence taken in a court of law by means of the sign-language, and such evidence was expected as if it had been spoken or written.

Lastly, there is the language of the eye, by which ideas are interchanged without the necessity of words or gestures. It is essentially the language of idea, and by it spirit speaks directly to spirit, conveying by a single glance of the eye thoughts which whole volumes would fail to express.

There is none so obtuse that he can not understand the fiery glare of anger, the soft beaming glance of love, or the dull, purposeless stare of hopeless sorrow. When the mother contemplates her infant, her entire soul is adequate to express the boundless love which is manifested by the eye alone.—*Higher Life of Animals, Harper's Weekly.*

SURPRISE PARTY.

A surprise party was held at the house of Roswell Howk, in this city, on Saturday evening, in which a number of the friends and neighbors of Mr. Howk (about 40) met and had an oyster supper, provided by the guests. Mr. Howk is a deaf-mute, and was born in the town of Watertown in the year 1800. He is consequently now 75 years of age. The spread was a capital one, and the company as well as the aged couple did ample justice to the good things provided. At the conclusion of the repast the old gentleman thanked the company in his voiceless way, but gratefully and feeling for all that.—*Watertown Despatch, Jan. 25.*

PERSONAL.

Mr. D. BARNITZ, of York, Pa., has been elected assistant secretary of the Vigilant Steam Fire Company, notwithstanding his protest. He graduated at the Pennsylvania Institution in the year 1854.

Mr. A. T. READ, who graduated at the American Asylum, Hartford, Conn., in 1845, has a fine farm containing 100 acres, well-stocked, and with good prospect ahead.

Mr. JAMES FISHER, for many years a teacher in the Georgia Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, but who recently discontinued his profession there, has returned to his wonted task in the above Institution.

It is with pleasure we chronicle the success in business of Mr. M. H. Bentz, a graduate of the Pennsylvania Institution. Mr. B. has resided for many years in York, Pa., where, by close attention to his business, he has accumulated quite a nice little fortune. As a cabinet-maker and ornamental painter he ranks among the first in that borough, and his home is surrounded with all the comforts he could wish or desire. He has been thrice married, and has a family of several children. His last wife also graduated at the same Institution.

Mr. WM. A. DEERING, of Pittsfield, N. H., considered one of the best base-ball players in that State, is a member of the Deering B. B. Club, which was named after him. The Deering B. B. Club has won laurels in a number of matches in New Hampshire, and claims the championship of the States. They propose making a tour this season and will test their ability as ball players with some of the most noted clubs of the country. Mr. D. is the only mute belonging to the club, and ranks as one of the best third-basemen in the Eastern States. He graduated at the American Asylum, Hartford, Conn., in 1865.

COLLEGE RECORD.

OVERCOATS are in demand.

BURSTED '75's Class Society.

PROMISING Astronomer—a green skater.

THE *Lit.* recently took in two new members.

THE Literary Society will give a reception soon.

BUSINESS brisk in Room No. 11, "six (6) apples for five (5) cents."

DYING AND SCAURING is the announcement of a neighboring shop.

THE students of the Select Course can boast of a poet among their number.

ORATIONS for Presentation Day must be handed to the Faculty by February 22d.

Mrs. BRADSHAW, of Brooklyn, N. Y., mother of Mrs. Prof. Fay, is visiting the Institution.

THE occupants of Room No. 11 are happy over a barrel of apples. Ditto No. 5, which they are selling cheap.

THE United States Consul from Bolivia, South America, honored the College with a visit on the 8th inst.

THE old College clock has been transferred to the dining room, for the benefit of the "College boys eating in silence."

THE members of the Reading Club resort to filibustering nowadays whenever a new rule is about to be introduced or passed.

THE students, judging from the number present, turned out *en masse* to pay their respects to President Grant at the last Levee.

ONE of the students would like to know whether there exists a college Library Society, as announced by one of our Co-temporaries.

THERE is a fine prospect of more skating, sleigh-riding perhaps, 'ere the winter season is over; something saw its shadow on the 2nd instant.

HAS the Senior Class lost its dignity? We want to know you know, as but one of the members has had courage enough to purchase a "stove pipe."

THE subject of debate before the Literary Society on the 5th was:

Resolved, That to be too credulous is more detrimental than to be too suspicious.

Both sides maintained their positions well. The judges who were neither credulous nor suspicious, rendered a verdict in favor of the affirmative.

MISS MAGGIE COLLINS, for the past three years employed in the laundry of the Institution, was married on the 6th instant to Mr. Michael Broderick.

SOME of the students have been doing a brisk business, hiring their skates at the low price of fifty cents for every day there has been sufficient ice for skating.

STILL another: *The Detroit Free Press* is the latest addition to the files of the Reading Room which contains now upwards of twenty-four magazines and newspapers.

A DISTINGUISHED physician on being asked what size was the best for a young man, replied, *Exercise*. It would be well for the students to aspire to such, and not huddle about the radiators to keep them warm. There is very little exercise in such.

WHO is G. O. A. who writes to the editor of the *Washington National Republican* an interesting letter headed, "Saturday Afternoon at Kendall Green," in which among other things the writer says that in his opinion it is worth a trip to Kendall Green to see a lot of College boys eating in silence! Our curiosity is prompted by the desire to extend the writer an invitation to dinner.

A NEW apparatus for heating water has taken the place of the old one, in the college bath-room; but its efficiency has not been tested as yet owing to the scarcity of water. And here we would remark, that the District authorities would put us under many obligations were it to hurry and lay that 6-inch water pipe from the Capitol to the College which it ordered to be done a month or so back.

THERE was a delightful party upon Saturday evening, the 6th instant, over at the parlors of the Primary Department, which was participated in by nearly all the officers of the institution and the members of the junior class. The evening was spent most pleasantly in various games and social chit-chat among those present. Mr. Jones enlivened the occasion by the recital of Chas. Lamb's dissertation on "Roast Pig," after which the party sat down to a collation prepared by *Freund*, to which we will venture to say they did ample justice. At a late hour the party separated and sought "tired nature's sweet restorer," etc.

AN exceedingly valuable acquisition has been made by the purchase of the late Dr. Charles Baker's library of works relating to the deaf and dumb. This library consists of more than three hundred handsomely bound volumes, including many that are very rare. With the material already possessed it gives us what is probably by far the largest and best collection of such works in the world, with the exception of the library of the MM. Guyot, at Groningen. A catalogue is to be published during the present year. It is certainly a matter of congratulation, not only for this Institution, but for all the American Institutions, that such a collection should have been secured for our country.—*Annals.*

INSTITUTION NEWS.

MISSISSIPPI.

HARD times and the failure of the crops in this State the past season, have prevented a number of our pupils from returning; but owing to the arrival of nearly as many new ones, we have almost as many pupils now as at the last session. As not many of our pupils went home during

the holidays, we decorated the hall and parlor with evergreens with which our grounds abound, and made the most of the occasion.

A few weeks ago, Dr. Lea, the genial Superintendent of the Blind Institution invited the officers and a number of our pupils to attend a party. When the time came it was drizzling, rain and muddy was the way. But we went nevertheless. I did not know that the blind could dance until I saw them do so. Several members of the Legislature were present, as well as a number of citizens of Jackson. Just as I was leaving, I discovered a brass band in a room adjoining the one in which we danced, and I suppose it supplied the music.

We have been playing croquet all winter and we are now ready to play anybody in the world, provided he or she will come half way. The health of the Institution has been unusually good this season. We fear that the Legislature will reduce our usual appropriation, as it is cutting down expenses and reducing all of its appropriations. J

INDIANA.

THE Indiana Legislature is now in session, and on the afternoon and evening of Jan. 23th we were honored with a visit from the Committee of both Houses on Benevolent Institutions. They spent the afternoon in looking over the house and work-shops, and in the evening we gave them an exhibition in the Chapel of the methods of instructing the deaf and dumb. This was done by calling up classes of various grades, beginning with the lowest, and asking them such questions as would lead out the method used in their daily instruction. First came Mr. Vail, with a class of little boys and girls so bright, pretty, and well trained that it was a pleasure just to look at them. Then Mr. Latham, in his breezy way, exhibited the merits of his new book and method of teaching the deaf, with a class which exceeded any second-year pupils we ever saw in knowledge of language. Mr. Angus followed with a class in geography; Mr. Hammond with one in arithmetic; Mr. Valentine with one in grammar. Mr. Burt with one in U. S. History, and Mr. Gillet with the three grades of the High Class. There were some recitations. The prettiest thing we ever saw in the way of rhythmical motion was the signing of the "House that Jack Built" by ten boys and girls prettier than their signs. "Robbing the Post-office" was the pantomimic fun of the evening; John Vanderford, Amos Myers, and John McDaniels rendered it in a style that made every body laugh. The exhibition closed with devotional exercises in signs by Mr. Vail who repeated the story of the Prodigal Son; five little girls who recited a hymn; ten members of Mr. Angus' class who said the Lord's Prayer, and last, a Chant by three members of the High Class; Alice Robinson, Ida Fawcner and James Sansom. Three members of the committee gave us speeches and expressed astonishment at what they had seen. One said "I have seen what I never expected to see and I am now convinced that the deaf may be educated to fill positions in the higher walks of life." Mr. Marvin expressed his thanks to God that twenty-five years ago it had been his privilege to help legislate for the money to build the Institution building that had been productive of so much good. On the evening of Feb. 3, the senators and representatives from this county gave us a visit and we entertained them in much the same way.

One of the pupils named Caleb S. Andrews was taken home a short time since in the hopeless decline of consumption. With a teachers knowledge we say that the Institution has lost, not only a bright, but a very good pupil. Charles E. Thompson left on Feb. 2 for his home in La Fayette, on account of continued ill health. He was a member of the Middle grade of the High Class, but will never graduate now, as he expects to seek in Colorado the greatest boon of earth, good health.

Indianapolis, Feb. 3, 1875.

LAURA.

CALIFORNIA.

THE account of the fire has already been given in the last issue of THE SILENT WORLD; but its cause was then unknown.

Mr. Wright, the architect of the Building, of the firm of Wright & Saunders, explained as follows:

The construction of the building, which is formed like a letter H, having a front and rear elevation, connected by another elevation at right angles, each of these covered with a gothic shingle roof. The smoke flue from the kitchen, which was in the rear of the rear elevation stood just twenty-five feet from the rear wall of the main building. The top of this flue or chimney was below a level with the ridge-pole of the elevation, and probably not more than forty feet by a level line from the shingle roof, which slanted toward the chimney or flue. In the lower part of the roof was a grated ventilator. There was a strong wind blowing all day, from the direction of the chimney toward the roof. The witness' theory was that either a spark was carried by the wind through the ventilator and up under the roof, or that a spark was lodged directly on the roof, and being blown underneath the butt of a warped shingle was fanned into a blaze. He explained the nature of the defects in the flues of the main building, and did not think it probable that the fire could have originated from them. It was likely

that the fire might have been burning or smouldering an hour or more before it was discovered. There was a perfect system of ventilating drafts through the building, up into the garrets, and thence into the tower. The witness thought the most probable theory to be that the fire smouldered in the garret of the rear elevation until it caught the inside of the ventilating flume or box, when it would be carried with terrible swiftness through the flume, and into the tower. This would account for the early falling of the tower.

Colonel John Scott, being present, was called upon to give his theory as an expert builder and fireman and as a man well acquainted with the construction of the burned building. His idea coincided with Mr. Wright's theory. He had pleaded with Governor Haight at the time of the erection of the building not to give it a shingle roof, and had predicted a conflagration. But a shingle roof was put on, because of lack of funds.

Several other witnesses were examined, but the testimony failed to develop anything new.

The Directors retired to deliberate and in about an hour rendered their opinion in the following verdict:

Resolved, That after a full investigation of the circumstances of the fire that has destroyed the building of the Institution of the Deaf and Dumb, and the Blind of the State of California, that the united testimony of the witnesses examined, in the judgment of the Board, exonerates the Principal, teachers and employees of the institution from all blame of carelessness, and shows that they promptly and efficiently did all that could be done, under the circumstances, for the safety and comfort of the pupils. Also, that the testimony shows conclusively the fire originated in the northeast corner of the building, between the roof and the ceiling of the third story rooms, and spread thence along the attic, directly under the roof, to the tower in front; and the exposure from sparks from the kitchen chimney, either by lighting and kindling on the shingle roof, or flying through the louvers into the attic, under the strong wind prevailing at the time from the northeast, is fully sufficient to account for the fire.

J. MORA MOSS,
L. HAMILTON;
T. L. BARKER,
E. J. CRANE,
D. D. SHATTUCK,
Board of Directors.

With my full concurrence.

NEWTON BOOTH, Governor.

Attest: H. A. PALMER, Secretary.

Throughout the investigation the Directors evinced a desire to get at the true facts of the case, and gave no grounds for a charge of endeavoring to whitewash the affair. Any one was allowed to ask questions, a privilege which several besides the Directors availed themselves of.

The Board of Directors of the Deaf and Dumb Institution have decided to decline all the offers made for the renting of buildings, and to erect temporary buildings, on the grounds of the Institution. This is in accordance with the following resolution adopted by the Board.

Resolved, That in view of the expense necessarily attending the alteration of such buildings as were offered, and as the advantages of the present site in having buildings, which can be made use of, vegetables, water and other conveniences, we deem it for the interest of the Institution to erect suitable buildings for the temporary use on grounds at Berkeley. Apparatus has been ordered to be procured for the equipment of the schools.—*San Francisco Evening Bulletin Jan. 27.*

MARRIED.

At the residence of the bride's father, Berlin, Wis., on Thursday, Jan 7th, 1875, by Rev. C. R. PATTEE, Mr. P. S. ENGLEHARDT, of Milwaukee, and EUPHEMIA, daughter of C. VEDDER, Esq. Miss Vedder is a semi-mute, and graduated at the Wisconsin Institution in 1869-70. Mr. Englehardt is also a graduate of the same Institution, and was for a time at the National Deaf-Mute College, but now in business at home

B

DIED.

MRS. ANNA DOWNEY, wife of John Downey, after a four-month's illness, on the 27th of January, 1875, at 4.35, P. M. Mrs. Downey was in her twenty-sixth year; a beloved wife and friend to those who knew her, and her departure is a great loss to her many friends. She leaves a kind husband to mourn her loss and a motherless child four months old.

Mrs. Downey was a former pupil of the Wisconsin Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, and graduated there in the year 1866.

John Downey is well known in the New York Institution or at least by the older graduates, as he was educated there. Mrs. D. was Annie Harrison, also known in New York as the sister of Will and George Harrison.